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A  
Fast-Sermon,  
Preached to the  
L O R D S

IN THE  
High-Court of Parliament Assembled,  
On the Day of  
SOLEMN HUMILIATION  
for the continuing PESTILENCE,  
O~~ct~~ob. 3. 1666.

And by their ORDER Published.

By GEORGE Lord Bishop of Chester.

Hall



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KING OF THE

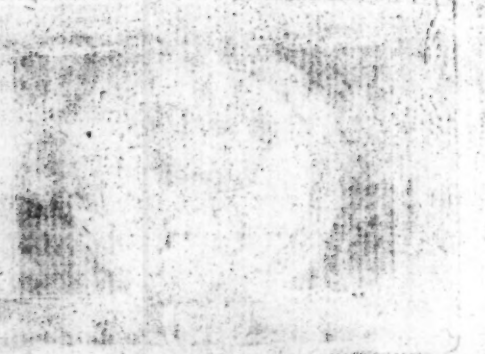
SEA

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## Psal. vii. 9.

*O let the wickedness of the wicked come  
to an end, but establish the just.*

**T**Hat our Plague-sick Land may be  
healed, That the destroying Angel  
after his slaughter of so many thou-  
sands and Ten thousands, may be bidden to  
return his Commission as sufficiently exe-  
cuted; This is the aim; and business of  
our solemn convention and posture of Humi-  
liation this day; a Humiliation, which as  
long as it hath been continued, I wish it were  
yet well begun; we are both called, and con-  
cerned to seek the face of our infinitely in-  
censed God; and we have answered, *Thy face, Psal. 27. 8.*  
*Lord, will we seek.* But that we may seek him  
not in vain, we must seek him in earnest; and  
the holy Prophet is our ready Monitor, *If Is. 21. 12.*  
*you will seek him, then seek;* do it to pur-  
pose: And he seems, me thinks, to pull us  
on, whom he sees negligent and dilatory, *Re-*  
*turn,*

## II.

Isa. xl. 12. turn, come, seek him in earnest? But so we may,  
 and yet in vain, if we seek him not in a right  
 order: we know there was a breach of  
 God upon his people once for this, *That they*  
 1 Chro. 15. 13. *sought him, but not in a due order:* And cer-  
 tainly, the right order of removing judgments  
 is, *a causa ad causatum*; beginning with the  
 cause; taking away that, that the effect may  
 cease: That a fire may be put out, the fuel  
 which feeds it, must be withdrawn, or well  
 quenched: That there may be no foul wea-  
 ther, there must be no condensed clouds, no  
 foul vapours exhaled: That there may be no  
 Plague to be deprecated, there must be no  
 plague of the heart cherished, for there it be-  
 gins, *That the sores and breaches of a Land*  
 Psal. 60. 2. *under which it mourns and shakes, may be*  
 healed, the backslidings of that Land must be  
 healed, *Here is a short course, and a sure issue;*  
 Jer. 2. 22. *Let wickedness come to an end;---let pestilen-*  
 tial manners cease, and the pestilence hath no-  
 thing to seize upon; Pray down the one, and  
 you pray off the other. Now you see the Text  
 is proper, natural, and right to our purpose;  
 God make my sudden thoughts upon it as  
 kindly operative upon all our hearts, *salvatore*  
 1 Tim. 1. 13. *abys,* healing, sound, wholsom words should  
 be spoken by us at all times, but at such a time  
 especially, that they may be medicinal and  
 preservative,



### III.

preservative to drive away, to keep off infection, to restore health to the daughter of Gods people, the cure is much in our selves, as the cause of the disease is altogether in us.

Wickedness to come to an end? This is not *iniquum petere*, but is it not *in auditum petere*? Well might this be the option, the wish rather than prayer of David the good King; but the prediction of David the Prophet sure it could not be; For to what time could it be calculated? or when should these things be? Not till there be a new Heaven, and a new Earth, a more pure, holy and happy age then ever yet was, and much less is like to be. Let the wickedness of the wicked come to its height, so as to reach up to Heaven; let the measure of iniquity be filled up, and running over; let the manners of men be so superlatively and profligately vicious that they cannot be worse. If the Text had been thus, this age would bid fair for the fulfilling of it, but not otherwise, and to any one who will measure the acceptableness and energy of a prayer, by the likelihood of its success and return, this looks like a prayer quite lost, and sounds like that strange Absolution which was pronounced over a great sinner, *Poeni tui misereatur si vult* (i.e. *condonet* (*quod non credo*)). But God forbid we should cast all those prayers as vain

and unacceptable, which do not obtain their expressed effect. We pray in our Litanie, *That God would have mercy upon all man*; We know he will not, or rather, in honour he cannot; yet it is a very acceptable piety, and duly extensive charity, to pray so. For would God have all men to be saved, and would not we? Is it a scruple to put as many into our prayers, as our Lord Christ did own dying for? Or are we afraid, lest the many prepared mansions in Heaven should be over-filled, though there were as many blessed Saints as Men? *My prayer returned into my own bosom*, (said this man after Gods heart, *Psal. 35. 13.*) such a return and reserve at least there is of every good mans Prayer, if it obtain no more; I do not say, this Prayer here did only return into *David's* bosom; I know the contrary; His enemies did feel the force of it.

And whose looks into the occasion of this Psalm, and considers how it was with this best of Kings, and Men, will see particular urgent reason for this Prayer, *That wickedness might come to an end*; For was he not hard beset with inveterate, irreconcilable Enemies? with false, treacherous Friends? Of his Council, of his Household, of his own Loins? Plotters against his Person? Disturbers of the peace of his Kingdom? There was no end of the malignity,

nity, nor like to be, unless the Divine Providence would give a strange check and stop unto it; therefore as if he did point at such particular persons, (the perpetual thorns in his side) at Achitophel, (saith Theodoret; but there is no good Synonymism in that) I did Saül, (say Cas-tan and Tyrannus) he devotes them to the justice of God, and in their destruction assures and foretells his own establishment. It may be the unhappy Fate of the best of Princes; That all the most obliging graciousness of his Govern-ment, shall not charize him to ungracious Sub-jects; his Golden Scepter shall gain no more to his obedience, then the Iron Rod of a Usur-per did; Wickedness will still have its Attempts, and there is no security from them; *smoking* Firebrands laid together, will be quickly ready to take fire, and set all in combustion; but as happy is the issue may help all; That wicked-ness shall come to an end; it shall be taken off; and shall not be able to hinder the establishment of his Throne; and that it may be so; prayer must be made to the righteous Punisher or Restrainer of the wicked, and establisher of the just. *Let the wickedness of the wicked come to an end.* But what do we find David here de-voutly cursing his Enemies on his knees? *re-teris Terebinthiis Calcestrum: Tre: Consumet mae-maliam impiam;* so the Interlinear. He wishes a  
 present

Psal. 59 5.

present Consumption upon them, destruction upon them; (as the *Chaldee*) They who thus understand him, do suppose his aim to be, onely at the more malicious, implacable Enemies of Gods Kingdom, and his, according to that other passage of this, *Be not merciful, O God, unto them who offend of malicious wickedness*, (to men of Saul's spirit.) But you may also (if you please) find some charity and tenderness appearing through all that anger; for as elswhere he said, *Psal. 141. 6. I will pray yet against their wickedness, or against their mischiefs, not against their persons*; so here he doth no more: It is (if you observe) *destruatur malitia*, not let them, but let their wickedness be destroy'd, and come to an end; and to confirm this, when David seem'd most exasperated, so that he could not contain from a *Confundantur*, *Let them be confounded*; yet he did not curse; but blest the men, even in that, as he interprets himself, *Confound them* (that is) *in their imaginations*; and *Psal 83. 16. Let their faces be filled with shame*, but *ea consilio*, that they may seek thy Name; as if he did strike purposely at their wickedness, and yet would save their persons if he could: And the charitable gloss which *St. Basil* puts upon this prayer of his, is, That they may repent of their wickedness, and be reclaimed, and not infect others. But how *St. Austin*, *Jerom*, and some others with

## VII.

with them, *prima Cera*, could think that David here look't as far as to the *Jews*, Crucifiers of Christ, praying, That they might accomplish their wickedness, and so hasten the accomplishment of the redemption of Mankind, I confess I am too purblind to see so far off: Well, in praying, *O let the wickedness of the wicked come to an end.* 1. This supposition is clear:

Wickedness ( if let alone ) will be interminable and Infinite; there will be no end of the provocation, nor of the mischief of it.

2. Upon this the Inference will be strongly inforced, In Policy as well as in Piety; it should not be let alone, but provided against, and prayed against.

You have heard it often said by Divines, That every ungodly person sins *in eterno suo*; the passage was St. Gregory's, *Iustum ut qui in suo eterno peccavit contra Deum, in Dei eterno puniatur*: If the man we speak of, might live so long as his wickedness would live, and be continued, it would be to the days of Eternity; for so saith he again, *Iniqui voluissent sine fine vivere, ut sine fine potuissent in iniquitatibus permanere*: O God ( cries out our holy Psalmist ) *shall the Enemy blaspheme thy Name for ever!* for ever and evermore; or for ever and yet ( for so the Hebrew loves to exaggerate ) as if it would be a term of duration longer then eternity, in that



that he implies, *Let them alone, and they will certainly blaspheme thy Name for ever.*

Our Masters in the *Metaphysics* do easily determine, *Non dari actu Infinitum*, That God himself cannot make another Infinite; but if sin could be fitted with a subject to perpetuate it self in, it would prove the contrary; nay it doth also (it is no Paradox) prove an actual Infinity; For, when doth this leave a man? when it hath corrupted and worn out his miserable body, and brought him to the grave? Is this the last mischief of it? Alas no, the bad works as well as the good, do follow men into the other world; the sin is as immortal as the soul which it hath polluted; and what but that in the guilty Conscience, becomes the gnawing worm that never dyes? As the torments of the damned can be no other then eternal, so are their sins also; they can no more cease to sin, then to suffer; *Culpa quæ est irreparabilis de se, habet quod perpetuo duret, & ideo ei debetur pena eterna,* (saith *Aquinas*.)

The petulant and ever-impetunate nature of sin, how far it would be from giving over, and coming to an end, the daily practice of men gives Demonstration enough. As God said concerning those mad designing Babel-builders, *Gen. 11. 16. This they begin to do, and now nothing will be restrained from them which they have imagined*

to do: So may it be said of all other active  
 sons of wickedness, As men begin to do, ac-  
 cording to the visible wildness of their actings,  
 nothing would be restrained from them, there  
 would be no end of the mischiefs and confu-  
 sions they would make. The Evil which  
 is done, is *with both hands, earnestly*, as the Pro- Micah 7. 3.  
 phet most emphatically expresses the impiety.  
 By the way, Why should not we put both our  
 hands, as earnestly, (the strength of the *Bra-*  
*ebium Seculare* added to our weaker Ecclesiasti-  
 cal Coercions) to manacle and hamstring those נפלים  
 mighty men in outrageous wickedness, who  
 every where confront, not us, but God, being  
 engaged in a continual and open *Theomachy*? In  
 short, so far would ungodliness proceed, as the  
 not bounded malignity of a Devil could set it  
 on, until Heaven it self were turned into a Hell,  
 I am quite confounded to think of it. It is vul-  
 garly said of the *Crocodile*, That he knows no  
*Maximum quod sic*, he is alwayes growing bigger,  
 and never comes to a certain pitch of Mon-  
 strosity so long as he lives: Every habituated  
 wicked man would (if he were let alone) be  
 such a Monster; perpetually growing worse;  
 for sin doth never cease from him, but he from  
 that. There is a known expression in Scripture,  
*Rom. 2. Treasuring up wrath against the day of wrath;*  
 doth not that import a perpetual labour of Cu-  
 mulation,

mulation, and adding to the heap so long as the Divine Justice will permit: whence the Apostles

1 Tim. 3. 6.

*exempla peccatorum iniquitatis; mulieres peccatis cumulatæ.*

Zach. 5. 7.

Joel 3. 13.

We read of an *Ephah* going forth, a full measure of iniquity, (by this token, A *Woman* was seen sitting in the midst of it) and of *Fats* so full that they overflow'd; I do not suppose such a full measure intimated there, that no more would be

Job 14. 17.

added, but no more is permitted to be added, the Actors being taken off. We read of *Transgression* sealed up in a bag, and iniquity sowed up: That Seal is not put upon the bag, nor is it sown up by the transgressors themselves, but by the righteous God, whose wearied long-suffering cannot hold out to endure their transgressions any longer; and it is so expressed, *My transgression* is sealed up in a bag, and *thou* sowest up mine iniquity; I acknowledg also the damning phrase of *Fulfilling lusts*, yet I do not think that ever any man did plenarily fulfil his lusts, so that they required no more service of him; that he could ask, *et in iis vivam*, and supererogate this way; but that being wholly devoted to them, he doth his *devoir*, and spends himself in their service. For are lusts ever to be fulfilled and satiated? Come to particulars, I would know when *Covetousness* will think it self sufficiently crammed and served? That *Daughter of the Horse-leach* crying always, *Give, give*, certainly

Eccl. 10. 4.

# XI.

as soon will Hell and the Grave say, It is enough. Though a sordid avaricious wretch should sit brooding on his Bags to multiply them, though he could wallow among his heaps of Gold, and could grasp as much as his eye can reach, and would take the Devil to his word, as he is ready to do, *All these things will I give thee*, is it possible he should yet account himself full, and well-pleased? No, it is quite otherwise, *The eye is not satisfied with seeing*. This *ὁφθαλμὸς τῆς ψυχῆς* 1 John 2. 16. *μὴν* is never to be gluted. *Sacrilege* (whose mouth is an open Sepulchre) Would this ever leave swallowing up and devouring, while the Church hath any remaining Patrimony, God any house in the Land to be appropriated and taken into possession?

Will Lust think it hath had gratification enough, so long as there is any Marrow left in the bones? What God said by his Prophet, of the spiritual whoredom, is more experienced of the bodily; *Thou hast multiplied thy Fornications*, Ezck. 16. 29. *and yet thou art not satisfied*.

When will Schism sit down, as thinking it hath made the rupture wide enough in the Garment of Christ? Certainly not till it hath torn all into small pieces, so that Lots may be cast for it; not till the Church of God be all in fractions, quite dis-churched by it. There is without all question, an infinity of wickedness,

of it self it would never come to an end.

Psalm 76.

What then remains, but that it be shortened and cut off, that a Providential violence be used upon it? *The fierceness of man shalt thou, O Lord, restrain; so the rage of mans wickedness shalt thou restrain. Thou who dost put a hobk into the nostrils of the Leviathan, a bridle upon the Sea, and saist, Hitherto shalt thou go, and no further; and here shall thy proud waves be stayed; Thou by the interposel of thy Mighty, Over-ruling, Coercive Power, canst, and wilt do this, which else will never be done.*

Dissert. 4.  
ἡ δὲ μένος  
μαντιῶν  
πολλῶν ἡ  
χρησμῶν  
μυσίων.

The ingenious *Max. Tyrius* hath a grave Dissertation of the *ἡ ἐκείτοις τῆς μοχθηρίας πολλὰς ἐπὶ ἀνθρώποις*, The many, and those everlasting Torrents of wickedness, so multiplied, and so strong, that they might require, and puzzle many Oracles, (*χρησμῶν μυσίων* is his word) to tell men when there will be a stop of them; and no man (saith he) in my opinion, can be blamed for asking inquisitively this Question of the Oracle (the very Question of the Text) *Τὴ τέλος μοχθηρίας?* what the end of wickedness will be? or, whether there will be any end at all? To this (as he adds) *Socrates* could answer, as well as *Apollo Pythius*; and therefore did *Apollo* adopt and take him in as his Colleague and Assessor, — *ὅτι ἢν ἐμὲ τευχες αὐτῷ*, because he had as good skill as himself: The only way that I know to give



# XIII.

give an Oracular Answer to this Question, will be this; When iniquity is full ripe, and ready for vengeance, then it shall have an end; as when the Corn is ripe and yellow, the Sickle is called for, *Put ye in the Sickle* (saith God to his Reapers the destroying Angels) *for the Harvest is ripe*, for the wickedness is great. It was the sad greeting of unhappy Zedekiah---*And thou--* whose day is come, when iniquity shall have an end. And when is that, in a full and proper sense, but when it hath passed all its gradual Acts, so that it is now consummate, perfected and compleated; *ἁμαρτία ἀποτελειθεῖσα*, (as the Apostles word is) *sin finished*, and so the Sept. renders *David's* sense here by a pregnant word *συτελειθεῖτω*; signifying both *consumatur* and *consummetur*, when it is got to its height, acting all the parts of an Imperial Usurper, being grown despotical and Absolute, Legislative and Imposing; and when the Dominion of it is so extended, that it is become National and Universal, so insolent, that it tramples and glories over all Laws of God and Men; so impudent, that it hath steel'd its forehead, and is openly shameless, boasting of its exploits; *They declare their sin as Sodom, they hid it not*: So wanton also, that it racks the brains of men to devise new modes of wildness: And indeed, to proceed Professors in Vice in the Devils Academies now, doth require more.

# XIV.

Pfal. 64. 6.

more Art and improv'd ingenuity in ungodliness, then those duller and less studied sinners our fore-fathers, could attain unto. Simply to commit sin, in an ordinary vulgar way, is small demerit; but *to search out iniquities, and to accomplish a diligent search*, our holy Psalmist notes this as a proof of a fair advance of the Devils *Vertuosi*. The Sept. have in an elegant kind of Reduplication exprest the industriousness of men more studiously wicked, by their researches of new ways, and mysteries of iniquity, in that place, *ἐκπεύνησαν ἀνομίαν, ἐξέλασαν ἐκπευνῶντες ἐξέπεινῶντες*, but mens practice out-doeth the expression, they studying some more new, and formerly unknown ways of ungodliness, to accomplish themselves, and as if a consultation had been had with the *French, Italian*, and all outlandish Devils, to advise us of all their several Modes and Fashions of Vice, we are so good at following them, that indeed we are more compleat in them then our Patterns. And what? when the hearts of men are so full of impiety, that they cannot contain from venting

James I. 21.

*ὑπερβολὴν κακίας*, the superfluity or overflowing of the gall of wickedness, in Atheistical droling scoffs at whatsoever is most Sacred, and to be trembled at; and our ears tingle to hear such high and frequent darings of Divine vengeance, that the most deeply damned in *Hell* could never

ver

ver be guilty of worse, when wickedness is  
 come up to this heighth, Is it not near coming  
 to an end? Wonder not if this be the *cordo-*  
*lium* of all who are faithful and sensible in the  
 land; if it put them into the lamenting Pro-  
 phet *Jeremy's Iliaca passio*, his fit of the Cho-  
 lich, to cry out, *My bowels, my bowels, I am* Jer. 4. 19.  
*pained at my very heart*, my heart maketh a noise  
 in me, I cannot hold my peace: It is enough  
 (shall I say) to vex the soul of a righteous 2 Pet. 2. 8.  
*Lot?* to make a zealously affected *Ezra* to rend  
 his *Garment*, and his *Mantle*; to pluck off the hair  
 of his head, and of his beard? To raise a *Paro-*  
*xisme* of grief and indignation in the holy Ezr 9. 3.  
*Apostle?* Yea, truly, to make the hearts of Παραξυσίτη  
το πνέμα  
αυτοῦ  
Act 17. 16.  
 all good men to sink and die in them; to  
 see how prodigiously lewd and impudent  
 men are grown, since that most obliging mi-  
 racle of our *Restoration*; *Seneca* declaimed  
 sufficiently as he thought against the vices of  
 his time, when he said---*Certatur ingenti quodam*  
*nequitia certamine*, Men do play prizes in wick-  
 edness; as if he were the gallantest man who  
 could be most wicked; and *Undique velut signo*  
*dato*; that is the phrase of the Scripture too: Jer 8 6i  
 As the Horse rusheth into the battle upon the  
 signal given, so do men fearlessly run upon  
 the Pikes of divine wrath, through whatso-  
 ever wickedness is before them. It was bad  
 when

Psal. 12.

when he observed such was the generality of all kind of Iniquity---*Ut Innocentia non rara sit, sed nulla.* He did there in effect cry out with our holy Psalmist, *Help, Lord, for the godly man ceaseth,* the fidelities fail from among the Children of men, such also it seems was the publickness and impudence of vice then---*Ut scenam desiderent,* They want onely (saith he) open Theaters, or Belconies to be seen acting their lewdness upon---*Omnem omnino pudorem, &c.* Modesty is put out of countenance; nay,---*Adeo lupanar quoque verecundum est,* a very Brothel house is modest in comparison. *Tertullian* thought he had complained enough ( and he never wanted expressiveness ) when he said---*Delicti durior frons est, & ab ipso delicto impudentiam docti, &c.* and when he taxed some of the other sex, calling them---*Pudoris sui interemtrices, & infelicissimas publicarum libidinum victimas;* I am loth to English it. The holy Bishop and Martyr *Cyprian* thought himself no doubt a sower and severe Reprover when he complained to the Proconsul of Africa that there was no shame of wickedness remaining; and men did so offend---*Quasi per ipsa peccata placeatur,* and so *Salvian*---*Quasi liceat, quasi oporteat:* but truly all those were soft and gentle redargutions, like old *Eli's* ( Nay my sons ) which Reverend *Du Moulin* call'd whipping them with *Rosmary*: they were not smart enough

*Cyprian ad De-*  
*recipitandum.*

enough for this Brawny Age; those Times brought forth but Punies and Pigmies in comparison of our *Anakims* wickedness: Now sure when it is come to such a formidable height, it is time for good men to be upon their knees, to pray that it may come to an end.

The general Concernment for this, is so great, that (*interim ut sit*) they being let alone, nothing could be imagined to follow, but the worst that can be imagined. We will dispute no longer in the Schools, whether sin be a meer Privation? Whether it hath any Positive Entity? Be it a privation, it is such a one as hath very real Influx, and is the efficient of most horrid mischiefs, being enough to bring Heaven and Earth together.

Lord! what dismal and amazing changes will this make? What *Elijah's* powerful prayer did for the better, this will do for the worse; when there is a clear skye, like a *Molten Looking-Glass*, (as it is most elegantly called) not a Job 37. 18. Cloud to be seen of the bigness of a mans hand, all on the sudden this shall overspread with black Clouds the whole face of the Heavens, and make a Meridian night, the Sun going down at noon-day.

What effects will it not have upon Nature: it self? upon every Element?

Upon the Air to corrupt and poyson it, till



# XVIII.

to become Pestilential, and make the breath we draw, and live by, the savour of death unto us, (our present case and complaint.)

Upon the *Earth*, to make it quake under the Inhabitants, or open its mouth to swallow them up.

Upon the *Water*, to make such an opening of the Windows of Heaven, and the Fountains of the deep, as shall let in a Deluge to drown a world.

Upon the *Seasons* of the Year, to make them so unkindly and interfering one with another, as if Nature had quite forgot itself.

Upon the *Soyle*, making a fruitful Land barren.

Upon the very *Name* of a People, changing it from *Amni* to *Loammi*; as it changed *Pashur's* Name to *Magor Missabib*, of which *David* was the Interpreter, *Fear on every side*; was it his Name? or is it not ours?

Psal. 37. 13.

Upon *Cities*; *O thou Enemy*; thou hast destroyed *Cities*; *their memorial is perished with them*: is a terrible word, importing plucking up by the roots, utter destruction—*ipse perire ruine*, and so that their memorial is perished with them, unless it be in the Stories of their ruine; there are no remainders of them; nay, there is more also in it, if the *Seventy* did not mistake for they read *et* with a sound, *The ruine*

Psal. 9. 6.

is so made, that the World rings of it.

Upon a Church, what disorders will it not bring? what evil Angels or *Asmodei* will it not send? the raisers of all our storms, the Authors and Fomenters of all our intestine Divisions, Factions and Schisms; the setters of all the Close *Juncto's* for the carrying on of endless Commotions.

And now if such a world of mischiefs as I cannot name, do follow upon wickedness, and that also is so far from coming to an end; what shall I say or think of our condition?

We will give glory to God this day, though to the confusion of our own faces: It was time for thee, Lord, to lay to thine hand, to take hold of Vengeance, to spend thine arrows upon us, as thou didst once threaten, Deut. 32. 33. *I will spend my Arrows upon them;* and didst bid the Archers to spare no arrows against *Babylon*, Jer. 50. 14. *to shoot at her, for she hath sinned against the Lord.*

One of those arrows (the first commonly of the three which God makes use of) and of which we have frequent mention, (*Warre*) hath been not onely upon the string, but drawn and shot, so that it sticks still in us, and---

God onely knows, who is the Lord of Hosts, and great Arbitrer of War, what the issue will be. As happily as we have been engaged against our Enemies, being blessed

with glorious Successes (under an excellent Conduct:) The Apostles counsel is good and proper for us, *Be not high-minded, but fear.* The Alternations of the success of War, have been every Ages Experiences; *Homer's* *Andromache*, *Achilles*, and his *Patroclus* *and Hector*, was not more elegant than certain.

And suppose the best, I cannot but sadly think, what a lost labour, what a damp we may put upon all those most hazardous and valiant Engagements of our Friends at Sea, if while they do their work to the height of our wishes and prayers, making themselves formidable to the flying Enemy, we being at such an unhappy distance from God by our unrepented wickedness, do seem to enter prohibitions in heaven against our enjoyment of our Successes. Alas! what is it to prosper and prevail at Sea, where the Righteousness of our Cause (in the hands of our just God to whom we appealed) makes us Victors, if in the meantime the unrighteousness of our persons and practices do so continue to provoke God by Land, that he cannot but set his face against us, and break out upon us? We may possibly still beat and Master them, but God, I am sure, will be too hard for us; they may flee before us one way, but we may be put to flee, if we could, from Gods wrath seven ways; we may be potent abroad, but

but feeble and undone at home; God give us hearts to consider it.

The other poisoned Arrow of *Pessilence*, is that which we now sigh and groan under, which fires our blood, and kills us; --- *Haeret lateri lethalis arundo*: How this hath flown by day and night, on this hand of us, and on that, lighting a little short of us, and beyond us; how it hath never missed its mark, though it could never glance aside to hit any but its mark; *Thousands have fallen beside us, and ten thousand at our right hands*, Our hearts do yet bleed with the thought of it; the perpetual doleful *Passing-Bells* both day and night in your ears who continued here during the heat of the Contagion, did (I am afraid) make Death too familiar to you, so that you have ever since less regarded and consider'd it; it being perhaps with you, as it is with the *Birds* which Nest in your Steeples, so used to the noise of Bells rung by them, that they hear them not. Alas! how did people fall then by the, righteous, but dreadful hand of God, as leaves beaten down by a vehement wind? such heaps upon heaps, that it might be reasonably hoped, the force of this deadly Arrow was spent, and it had done its worst; it was suspended at least, and superseded by that late dreadful Calamity of our Mother City; then one Rod of God swallowed

*Psal. 91. 7.*

Lev. 14. 45.

up another; A strange Cure and Remedy of that Disease was brought, by a more fearful Judgment: *Fire* had been formerly made in the Streets of the City, to purge the Contagious air; but here the activity of the fire upon, and within the houses, was most unhappily over-experimented, as if like that old fretting Plague of *Leprosie*, when it was so got into the house, that it was spread in the walls, and no scraping of it within and without could cleanse it, there was no cure but demolition; all the Stones and Timber were to be pulled down. So it seemed here, as if there had been no other way to free and prevent infected houses, but by firing and destroying them; the labour was then saved of shutting up the doors of the infected, and setting the *Red Cross* upon them, the *Red Cross* was all over; and that which opened the *Prisons*, and (without fear of an Indictment either of a *Rescue*, a *Riot*, or *Burglary*) did give a *Liberate* to poor unresponsible Prisoners of Debt, yea, to Malefactors also, that would not do less for Gods Prisoners, who were shut up for the Pestilence. I would not anticipate any thing of the Work of the approaching Fast Day for that *Astonishing Conflagration*. But how can I forbear to drop some tears as I pass, to weep over this our Mother-City, as our great Example our Lord and Saviour did over *Jerusalem*.  
 Lord



Lord ! What an incredible change have  
 three days made of the Metropolis of England,  
 and most famous Emporium of Christendom ?  
 It might be said, but a few days since, as,  
 Walk about Sion, and go round about her, tell the Psal. 48. 13.  
 Towers thereof, mark ye well her Bulwarks, Con-  
 sider her Palaces : See and observe O ye Tra-  
 vellers, the stateliness and convenience of  
 the Halls of her several Companies, the  
 comeliness of her many Churches, the libe-  
 ral accommodation of her Hospitals, the ful-  
 ness of her rich Shops and Warehouses, the  
 Royalness of her Exchange ; and is all this  
 glory so suddenly confounded and buried in  
 a common ruine ? a new sad comment upon  
 that word which was threatned to proud Wo-  
 men, not Cities, *Burning, instead of Beauty* ; no Isa. 3. 24.  
 thing remaining but a strange maze and laby-  
 rinth of naked Steeples, useless Chimneys and  
 pitiful fragments of ragged Walls, amidst per-  
 petual heaps of Ashes, Stones and Rubbishi ;  
*We have here no continuing City* (said the Apostle,) Heb. 13. 14.  
 Now we find it so indeed ; Forgive this little  
 turning aside, to see that sad sight ; we hoped,  
 I say, that the force of this deadly arrow of Pe-  
 stilence had been spent, and (blessed be the  
 good hand that sent it forth) it is not so fatal,  
 so hot, and formidable now in this place, as  
 when Moses said, *Go quickly, take a Censer, and* Numb. 16. 4.  
make

make an Atonement, stand between the living and the dead. But how it hath diffused its venome in many parts abroad--*Telum volat, & incandescit eundo*; What a circulation it may make, and how long it may be, before both the Head and Body of the Kingdom may be found arid whole? or whether ever it shall recover? is worth our solicitous thoughts, and the propitiating of our angry God, is our great and present concernment. But suppose the best here also, That our supplication this day is heard on high, Take away this plague onely, Are we ever the more secure from after judgments of some other kind? Do we not know, that God hath many other Arrows in his Quiver, as quickly to be drawn? Many other ways to ease and avenge himself of his Adversaries? Great plagues remain to the ungodly, great both for weight and variety, <sup>רבים</sup> is plural; many plagues, or sorrows. In the hand of the Lord is a Cup, and the wine is red, it is full of mixture, &c. A bitter composition of many deadly ingredients, and the Dregs of this are reserved, you are told for whom; The wicked of the earth shall wring them out, and drink them. Not some one great *Fluctus decumanus* onely, but all God's waves and billows shall go over them; and in conclusion, the evil of men (which will be sure to find them out) shall inevitably pursue them to their

their fearful end, if they use not a timely *Prolepsis*, to bring that to an end, and break it off by Righteouness.

Now I know, I should not need to make use of any other Rhetorick to deterre Impenitents from their sinful course, than those many angry and judicial passages in Scripture, though sounding like so many Tolerations and Licenses; as wherein they are bidden to go on, and fill up their measure, *He that is unjust, let him be unjust still; and he who is filthy, let him be filthy still, (viii.)* still so, and still more so; let the grinders of the faces of the poor, still keep their Mill going; let extorting corrupt Officers go on to pluck off the skin from their indigent suffering fellow subjects, and the flesh from off their bones; Our Demone Demagogues, God damn me Miscreants may proceed in their affrighting Hellish Ravings; all the various uncontrolled (and in former ages unexampled) wickedness must come to an end, *Damnation* (which *flambeeth not*, will much less *slay a way* from them whole proper portion is), it shall, I assure, at last, though not presently, overtake them. The Greek used to say, *θεοὶ οὐκ ἐστὶν ὀργιστοὶ*, God is not hasty to anger; yet, so as to punish the provocations of men, and we cannot say he hath been quick with us in the Judgments now upon us, he had waited  
E long

## XXVI.

long enough for our repentance, and given us many fair warnings before his answering by fire in that dreadful manner; but though his wrath be slow-footed, it is heavy-handed, *Tum gravior, cum tarda venit*, Men may be reprieved and respited for a while, but how is that? *Until the pit be digged up for the ungodly*, they may frolick and dance jovially upon the brink of that bottomless pit, but *their foot shall slide in due time*, for the day of their calamity is at hand, and the things that shall come upon them make haste: What was said of a son of violence, *he shall flee to the pit, let no man stay him*, will be the infallible fate of all other impenitent trespassers of the Divine Justice: But though by that Justice thus provoked, and sure to be revealed, I may menace and dare men to continue in their course at their utmost peril, yet I would much rather use a softer and more ingenious way, thus therefore:

If there were no such Judgment in the way to be seen or fear'd, as this which we now deplore, no such *Beſtom of Destruction* (the Plague is most properly call'd so, making clean work, depopulating and sweeping away whole Streets and Cities) if this were quite laid aside as useless, if this Rod were not held over us, as it is; or if it had no voice to preach Repentance to us, and we were not required now especially

Psal. 94. 13.

Deut. 32. 35.

Prov. 28. 17.

Esa. 14. 23.

to hear it, *Hear ye the Rod, and who hath appointed* Micah 6. 9.  
 it, *וְהָיָה בִּמְנוֹחָיו*, was Sophocles his known Epi-  
 thet, and the Plague is more peculiarly so, cal-  
 led therefore *wrath from the Lord*; and *וְהָיָה* Numb. 16. 46. the  
 word for the destroying Pestilence, some will  
 needs fetch from *וְהָיָה* *locutus est*, this being the  
 loud-speaking word from heaven of Gods  
 wrath against men. If God had no particu-  
 lar nor National Controversie (as our guilty  
 hearts do smite and tell us he hath a great Con-  
 troversie with us,) if that (which is the long-  
 ing and prayer of all good people) an honora-  
 ble, well-condition'd, and well-setled Peace  
 were concluded (which is now so far off, that  
 it is not within our prospect,) if this our *Jeru-*  
*salem* were established and made again the praise  
 of the Earth for outward splendor and prosper-  
 ity: In short, if all were well with us, and no  
 Temporal inforcement lay upon us to become  
 penitent and religious; yet that all such wic-  
 kedness as is now in fashion, should come to an  
 end, and resolutions should be taken up to this  
 purpose, I humbly offer to your thoughts upon  
 this onely consideration, and in this onely  
 name, because it is *the wickedness of the wicked*;  
 for what is not imported in that? Enmity a-  
 gainst God, *deicidium* (in will, though not in  
 effect:) What but this is the great make-bate  
 between God and his people? The disquietor,



as I may say, and griever of his Spirit? That which makes him *humanum pati*, to be affected, filled (*modis plenus*) with hatred, with jealousy, not onely smoaking, but burning like fire: That which provokes him to have recourse to his full Magazine of Weapons of Warre, his sharpened, furbished, and glittering Sword, his Battle-axe, his Rod of Iron, his Threshing-Instrument with teeth, his Wine-press, his hot Thunder-bolts; That which makes him press his Stars to fight in their courses, which puts him upon strange work, (the work of Judgment is so) and will not suffer him (without most unsufferable trespasses upon the Honour of his Justice and Righteousness) to keep his right hand in his bosome, to forbear smiting and punishing; *Do not I hate them, O God, which hate thee?* Should not I set against that (with all animosity) which sets so hard against thee, and makes thee set thy face so severely against men? None who now hear me, (if the whole Nation could be supposed within hearing) but should take up this Resolution. But in a more particular manner, You the Nobles, the Peers of the Kingdom to whom I am called to speak, should take it to heart: You well know, the due Honour of your Nobility cannot priviledg or exempt you from the common Obligation and Law of Religion,

no more then it can from common Judgments; your houses may be entred by a Pestilence, or a Fire, as soon as others: And need I be your Monitor, That the greater your Persons and Honours are, the more pressing is your obligation to be Religious, because your Examples are more leading, and imperative, and influential. The City-houses were not more catching of the flames from one another, than your Interiors are, and will be, of any Exorbitancies which they can see in you. And what is it that Illustrates and Ennobles your Nobility it self, making you to shine more gloriously and more serviceably to God and the King, but Piety and Religion; Religion, I say, not made your umbrage or pretext, nor your diversion and entertainment of leisure hours, but your great work and business. You have a Proverb, (I wish there were no worse going) *Bonus sanguis non mentitur*: O let it appear so by your virtuous and honorable actions answering the Nobility of your Blood; That you who are *ἱστυκ*, (that was your Name in *Athens*) should be *ἱστυκ*, (a rich and noble word in *Homer*) ever contend to excel in what is most excellent and laudable: You who are *Optimates*, should be *Optimi*, the Best wheresoever you are, is so necessary and essential to your high Quality, that it will make a *Solécisme* and contradiction

## XXX

to be other wise, Ascherch you will not  
 dure any filthy spots upon your Robes of  
 honour, upon your Stars, your Coronets, your  
 Brevetions, disdaining any thing that may  
 leave a stain and blemish upon your Names and  
 Families; so generously detest and abhorre  
 any thing which hath the Name of wickedness  
 named upon it. Take heed also, I beseech you,  
 of the iniquity of your Heels (your Attendants)  
 that it compass you not about.

We are talt to live (w<sup>o</sup>che while) in the  
 rry drege of Time; The worldlyth (rather call  
 ed) in wickedness, was never so demerit  
 Truth as now. But *Time et de malis*, is a  
 Reserve of holy Wisdom. If we cannot make  
 others better, yet to be sure, *he meris* shows  
 that they make not us worse.

To stem, and yet vigorously against the  
 stream of high swelling and over bearing wic  
 kedness, is a proof of Noble Christian strength.  
 To be Vertuous and Religious, Chast and Pure,  
 Regular and Exemplary, (even in this Court  
 where it is so much the Fashion to be otherwise)  
 This will be true singular honour for to be  
 Sacred Record; and if your Faces shine not here  
 among men, yet you shall assuredly shine as  
 Stars in the Firmament among the Blessed An  
 gels hereafter: Which God grant you all, To  
 your glory, and honour, and praise forever  
 for ever. Amen.